

PFCE-The Role of Leadership: Strategies for Implementing and Sustaining Change (Webinar)

Christine Patton: Welcome, everyone, to the second webinar in our Parent, Family and Community Engagement webinar series. Our first webinar gave us a broad look at the PFCE Framework Program Foundations. Today, we'll be digging a little deeper and looking closely at one of those Program Foundations: Program Leadership.

As you can see, we have a great set of presenters with us, today, representing a nice range of leadership roles. They are going to be presenting for about 45 minutes, and at the end, we have a slide that features questions from the audience and responses from the presenters. I will turn it over to our first presenter, who is Kiersten Beigel. Kiersten has been with the Administration for Children and Families and Health and Human Services for ten years, and in her role as Family and Community Partnership Specialist at OHS for five years. Kiersten is a social worker by training, and prior to her federal work, she had worked with parents and children in schools, hospitals, child welfare, mental health settings and shelter programs. Kiersten, I'll turn it over to you.

Kiersten Beigel: Thanks, Christine. It's really great to be with everybody this afternoon, and I wanted to take a moment to welcome you. There's so much interest in this topic and in this webinar series at large, and it's just really exciting. So, this is actually our second in a series, PFCE Framework Series -- how we're referring to it. It's looking at the Program Foundations that influence service areas for families. So, that language might be more familiar to you -- some of you than others, but we'll get to it.

I wanted to thank you all, for those of you who did participate in the first webinar and completed the evaluation forms. Those really help us in organizing the series. So, we think we're going to keep getting better with this, and we hope you'll stay along with us for the journey.

Here's what we're going to focus on today, though. We're going to focus on leadership and its connections to continuous improvement and professional development. We're going to think about creating a culture of continuous improvement to improve the use of time and resources in your Head Start program or your Early Head Start program. And we want to think about how -- and support you in thinking about how you can make informed choices about professional development that are really grounded in what you know about parents, families and staff, so that you can improve your relationship, your program family relationships. More specifically, and what I think tends to be the more interesting part of our presentations is that we'll get to hear from some programs about staff and parents' use of data and information that they're using to make decisions that really improve services and children's learning and development. So, that's an overview.

Let's talk a little bit about why this topic of leadership is so important. You know, Head Start has been a leader in the field of early childhood since 1965, as many of you know. And certainly Head Start parents have been leaders in influencing the field of early childhood, as well. In general, the area of Head Start leadership is something that the National Center on Program Management and Fiscal is focusing on. And they have some orientation material for Head Start leaders on their landing page on the ECLKC, called "What Head Start Leaders Need to Know." And they're also developing a Head Start A to Z for new leaders' training, which should be gaining a little more traction and become more familiar to the field of folks who are interested in accessing it over the next year. But we don't have to really re-create the wheel, because many of the things at Head Start that have been developed over the years really have stood the test of time.

So, we like to draw on our history and sort of build and enhance from that point. So, for example, looking at this slide, we had a training guide in 1997, which is quite a while ago now. And it was called "Understanding Leadership," and it was really about trying to help Head Start programs move into the 21st century. And it had two really important messages that are still quite relevant today.

First, of course, the idea that Head Start programs must provide "excellent services" for children and families, and that this "excellence," which we're often nowadays referring to as "quality," really works best when leadership is happening efficiently and effectively amongst directors, managers and parent leaders. And then the second idea is that anyone can really become a great leader. Indeed, Head Start and Early Head Start have long been places and spaces where great leaders have emerged.

So, we always need strong leadership in Head Start, and Head Start is always evolving, and the demands for quality also continue to evolve. There's certainly continuing demand for our services. Programs often feel the constraint of resources. And they -- you know, you're also, many of you, feeling the expectations from performance are at a real high right now. And that they're also evolving. So, there's a lot of adapting that goes on. But we really do depend upon leadership to ensure that services are making a difference for children's school readiness and for families' long-term wellbeing and engagement in their children's education. That said, though, leadership isn't just about positional authority and neither is it about individual characteristics.

Leadership is, and it can be learned. So, while I think we often associate management and governance including policy council with leadership, it's really important to keep in mind that all Head Start and Early Head Start staff can engage in leadership activity on a daily basis, so that really everyone in our programs can be, and have the capacity to be great leaders. Let's think a little bit more about what it does mean to be a great leader in Head Start today.

And we're going to draw on the expertise of John Kotter, who's a leadership expert. And he talks about three things that leaders do. He says that leaders set direction; they align people, and they motivate folks. So, indeed, many of you are engaged in activities and actions that support these efforts on a daily basis. But let's talk a little bit about some individually.

So, thinking about setting direction for change, and hopefully many of you, at this point, know this graphic well. This is the Parent, Family and Community Engagement Framework. If you don't, I'll give you a quick overview of what this really is. It's essentially a research-informed Framework, a theory of change, that when you have certain elements in place in your program, and you have strategies that are aligned across those elements, you can really make more progress toward supporting family progress in outcomes, and then support children's learning and development.

So, in other words, if you look at the yellow column, that's talking about some of the foundations that need to be in place, where family engagement strategies really need to be aligned. And that sets really a frame, if you will, for moving forward and creating an agency that supports systemic, integrated and comprehensive family engagement. And indeed, that's a lot of what this webinar series is about. So, we think of those sometimes as systems. And it's not all of the Head Start systems, but it's a few critical systems, in terms of thinking about family engagement. If you move forward, to the right, looking at the pink column, the Program Impact Areas, these are service components or service areas where, again, when family engagement strategies are aligned in a systemic and integrated way, that you're more likely to have and support family progress.

So, thinking about the program environment, family partnerships, teaching learning and community partnerships, all of these areas or elements in your programs play an important role in supporting effective family engagement. In the blue column, further on to the right there, are the seven key outcomes that we refer to as the PFCE outcomes and Head Start and Early Head Start, around family well-being, supporting parent-child relationships, supporting the role of families and parents as children's teachers and life-long educators, supporting families as learners themselves and as adults who are looking to develop in different ways, as parents enter career changes, employment, et cetera; thinking about transitions for families from different early childhood settings on into kindergarten;

the support and social networks that families have in communities; and finally, the outcome area of families as advocates and leaders, which really supports the idea of parents as leaders in our program, those decision-makers, and of course, as leaders and decision-makers in advocating for their children's learning and development and well-being in school settings, going forward.

And, finally that purple box, of course, the ultimate goal, beginning with the end in mind, as we say sometimes, is that children are ready for school. And the top arrow there is the positive and goal-oriented relationships. Without relationships across the Program Foundations amongst staff; without relationships between staff and the families, both the yellow column and the pink column, and through those relationships that support family partnership work together; none of this really works.

So, that's a really critical element of the Framework. So, leaders set the direction for change and can help programs think about family engagement in a systemic way. So, programs are using the Framework to set up specific program goals. With so many examples now -- which is really exciting -- the way the work we hear about going on in programs. And we really heard from many programs how they're using the Framework to set specific goals and using these goals to guide the development of their Family Partnership Agreement or processes, and about how they're beginning to look at data information about family progress, so leaders can use this information to figure out how their services can be improved. And using data to set directions for change, again, that sort of first idea of what leaders do, is thinking about maybe looking at community and self-assessment information and asking staff and families what needs to be done to support families. And so leaders will listen and gather a broad range of data and look for patterns and relationships to understand how they can create the vision and strategies that can make a difference.

So, that's a really critical question: "What needs to be done to support families?" And what are families' perspectives on that? So, for example, one Head Start program's vision was to improve its family partnership process to set realistic goals. And many families, you know, many families haven't had opportunities to plan for their future, particularly, when you think about the impacts of intergenerational poverty and how that can really -- doesn't create a lot of room or space or opportunity, sometimes, for thinking about setting goals. So, in some cases, goal setting can really be, you know, a very new process for families. And it can be both aspirational and realistic. But at any rate, the program -- this program wanted to change their goal setting process, so they engaged staff in reviving their family assessment to line up with those seven outcomes we talked about in the blue column in the Framework. And then, staff were able to work with families in sort of concrete and realistic ways to understand their needs and interests with regards to those outcomes.

And then, with a better understanding of the strategies that they were using across the systems in services -- so, in this pink and yellow column -- they were able to sort of help families do better work in working towards those outcomes -- or help staff and families, I should say, do better work in the family partnership process. So, keep in mind that a vision isn't something necessarily -- or a new direction isn't something transcendental or, you know, out of reach. It really is just the right change to make, based on the information that you have.

So, secondly, leaders align people. And what about that? I think leaders help people to connect to visions and goals, in order to move sort of everyone in the same direction and be more effective. This can be a lot easier to do in smaller programs. Or, maybe not easier, but it may be a much larger effort to be moving folks together across a much more complicated organization. But Head Start is complex in and of itself, in terms of the different staffing roles and the different discipline backgrounds that folks come from, the different functions.

So, I think the PFCE Framework promotes the idea that family engagement is a shared priority for all staff, despite the differences in role. And for many programs, this is kind of a new idea -- this idea that family service workers aren't the only staff with responsibility for family engagement.

So, thinking more about aligning people; strong communication supports alignment of staff across the organization. So, a program's leadership really has the task of sort of setting that communication up with staff, so that they all have a responsibility for goal-directed, positive relationships with families. So, really setting the tone. Sometimes, I think about the relationships as kind of -- the cells are the building blocks and the services and systems are the organs, if you want to think of it like an analogy just of a functioning body. The relationships are really critical. So, leadership does have a lot to do, in terms of setting that and helping people get more comfortable in doing relationship-rooted practice and relationship-building work, regardless of their role.

So, we know the Head Start programs are really beginning to train all staff, as well as parents, on the Framework and to include it in regular staff meetings and to use the National Center on Parent, Family and Community Engagement's tools, kind of like this simulation. You see a picture here in coaching and staff development. And if you haven't used this simulation yet, it is on our web page. And it really is a really nice entre into thinking about relationship practices, and how the decisions and choices we make, as we engage families, can sort of keep the relationship moving forward and open -- and communication open or ways that it might sort of shut down based on some of the choices we make.

So, later in this webinar, we'll be able to learn more about how one program is beginning to make this kind of a shift in thinking, that really, family engagement is everyone's business, certainly in thinking about relationships with families.

So, the last kind of idea around what effective leaders do, from John Kotter's perspective, is that they motivate people. And leaders motivate and inspire people to really embrace change. They involve staff and parents in decision-making, so that there's a sense of ownership and control over the change process. And, you know, when decision-making is a collaborative process, Parent, Family and Community Engagement efforts are going to be more effective. Right? So, when people have the opportunity to understand and embrace their role in the change process, it's really easier on everyone.

So we're going to hear more about how one program strives to build a learning organization and uses different strategies to motivate staff, to use data about children and families, sort of in their everyday work. So, not just once or twice a year, when there's a strategic planning session, but more sort of in their everyday approaches.

So, finally, I think this idea of motivation really relates well to being recognized and recognizing success and people and staff wanting to be understood and seen for the value of their contributions. This really gives people a sense of accomplishment and a sense of belonging to an organization. And recently -- well, not so recently, now -- but in April, at our Leadership Institute, the Office of Head Start rewarded programs for excellence and PFCE at the Leadership Institute. And just thinking about this as an idea, something that you can do in your programs, award different kinds of excellence around family engagement effort. But by giving staff -- excuse me -- opportunities to create positive change practices and policies, by recognizing their good work, leaders are really creating new leaders. So, when we partner with staff and parents, and we support their capacity to provide leadership in different ways, regardless of their role, the benefits for children and families will really continue beyond Head Start, into communities, schools and throughout life.

So, those are my remarks -- just kind of a general overview about leadership. And now, for the exciting stuff, I would like to turn it over to Mindy Zapata. She is the Director of Early Head Start and Head Start at Southwest Human Development. Mindy?

Mindy Zapata: Hello. My name is Mindy Zapata, and I'm the Director of Early Head Start and Head Start at Southwest Human Development, which is an Early Head Start to Head Start Program in Phoenix, Arizona. And as Kiersten highlighted, our Head Start and Early Head Start program has been really looking to deepen our commitment to using data to support what our leadership goals are in our program. And as we started about this journey in our program, we really felt like we had to help our staff understand how data could help inform parent, family and community engagement outcomes in a really meaningful way.

A lot of times, individuals that work in family engagement and child development in Early Head Start and Head Start programs are cautious to use data in their day-to-day processes. So, as our leadership goals unfolded, as we took under this project of deepening our commitment to using data-driven leadership, we really wanted to create an organizational culture that demystifies the day-to-day use of data in informing our process with parents, families and our community. And that led to strengthening our school readiness outcomes.

We really knew that we had to create and evaluate our systems that would support that use of data in what our staff are doing every single day with children and families within the community. And by doing this, by having this be one of our leadership goals, we really helped everyone in our organization really get into the driver's seat of using data in what they were doing in their everyday process in Early Head Start and Head Start.

So, where exactly would you begin as an Early Head Start and Head Start leader to go about really becoming much more of a data-driven leader within your Early Head Start and Head Start program? Well, some of the things that we did in our program that really helped us get this journey underway was that we really took a journey of considering what parent and family and community engagement data we were already collecting in our program.

As Kiersten highlights, Head Start and Early Head Start for many years have been collecting data that's relevant to informing parent, family and community engagement outcomes. So, that's what we did, as an organization. We really sat back and evaluated how we're currently collecting parent, family and community engagement data. When did we do this during the course of our program year? And then, how could this data really help inform the outcomes and the services to children and families? And that was a very transformational process for our program team, and that program team engaged everyone from leadership to those day-to-day practitioners in the Early Head Start and Head Start field.

And it really took the entire organization and team on this journey, so that everyone was shoulder-to-shoulder in their use of parent, family and community engagement data.

Some of our next steps, as leaders in our program was that we looked to what other sources of parent, family and community engagement data would really help inform the outcomes that we were hoping to see with our families and with our children. And when we were able to answer those questions, instead of collecting just mountains and mountains of data that we were not going to ever use, we really were able to streamline the data that we were going to use to integrate it into our existing program system.

So, it really didn't make our team feel overwhelmed. They were really excited about using the data to inform and expand what they were already doing in service of children and families in our program. And as a result of this, we've actually come up with a continuum of practice that we use in our program to help us really measure family outcomes in a way that links to our school readiness goals, and that our objective for using data in our program is really to sustain learning outcomes through their children's transition into kindergarten and well into the future.

And so, we have aligned our family outcomes to the Parent, Family and Community Engagement Framework, so that we begin to identify data as families come into the program. So, we have a baseline of data. And then, as we engage and work with families, we have other source of activities and then subsequent data outcomes to evaluate how families are emerging or moving into really high engagement in our program. And then it helps our staff, everyone in our program, both in child development and family development, to really make informed decisions with data to more highly engage families, as they experience the Early Head Start and Head Start services.

Some of the important things that I think have helped us both initiate and sustain change in our program over time, is that it was truly a team decision-making process. And I think when we engage our team in making data-driven decisions that they become empowered in such a way that they are now becoming active thinkers. It's no longer guess work in the way that they're delivering parent, family and community work within our local Early Head Start and Head Start program; and that they are really constructing the systems that help us know what we need to do to continuously improve our program and make the necessary adjustments along the way.

No longer as a program are we looking, for instance, with our PIR data, at the end of the program year to make subsequent changes in the upcoming year. We can actually make changes to better improve our parent and family outcome, as we are undertaking the journey of the school year, because we have data that informs how our families are engaged in their -- in a program and also in preparing their children to be successful in future school outcomes.

We've also identified that it has been so successful for our program that the Parent, Family and Community Engagement Framework and school readiness outcomes are not separate conversations but really integrated conversations. So, that was an extremely powerful experience for our program staff. It also has allowed us to really look at the opportunities that the data indicates for us, around parent, family and community engagement, so that we can integrate into our training and technical assistance activities, those professional development activities for our staff, so that we're continuously improving, not only what we're doing for kids and families, but what we're doing for the professionals in service of those children and families.

And as a result, I think as leaders, when you undertake this type of journey of using data, it really transforms your organization, to be a learning organization, where you have created a culture where you have team members who are actively thinking in your Early Head Start and Head Start program, to use data to really inform the process that's happening in your program. Our professional development settings have really expanded to include, not only services and systems, but very much a data fluency in our team.

So, that it's not just a particular group of individuals in our Early Head Start and Head Start program that is using data, that it's truly everyone -- from our policy council, our board of directors, to our teachers, to our family support workers, who are really using the data to guide what is happening in our program. So, it's a real-life practice; so, it's a very participatory and transformative process that's going on in our Early Head Start and Head Start program. And it's really constructed systems that have authentically used the parent, family and community engagement data to improve the outcomes that we're seeing for our families and our parents.

I would recommend to Early Head Start and Head Start leaders, as they're contemplating about taking this leadership goal underway in your organization, that really use your resources wisely. Data can really help create efficiency in your organization. So, as you're engaging your team, really think about those assets that you think data can create within your larger organization. And as we undertook this journey, we really learned that data could actually help tell a story.

I think in Early Head Start and Head Start, for many years, we've used narrative stories to express the success that families experience as they moved through Early Head Start and Head Start. But data can really complement those narrative stories, that we in the Early Head Start and Head Start community have been so effective in sharing with our Early Head Start and Head Start funders, as well as our larger community. And really integrating it all into a message that it's really about informing our school readiness outcomes, making sure that both our families and our children are ready for future school success. Well, that concludes my presentation. I'm going to turn things over to a colleague, Beth Nichols from Project Eagle. She's the Site Director at Project Eagle.

Elizabeth Nichols: Okay. I'd like to thank Mindy this afternoon. And I'll get started with my presentation. I'm going to discuss how we have used data to inform our practice in our program. Our program -- a little bit about ourselves. We are an Early Head Start program, for Wyandotte County in Kansas City, Kansas. We partner with a Head Start -- the local Head Start agency and the local school district for preschool slots in our center-based services. Some challenges as a leadership team that we solved in our program were that we were concerned about the relationship between teachers and families. And we really saw teachers struggling with strategies on how to empower parents. And our family support service workers really saw a huge disconnect between what was happening in the home and with the classroom teachers, and parents were approaching them about the disconnect that they felt, as well between themselves and what was happening in the classroom.

Our vision was to promote positive goal-orientated relationships between all staff and families, and we really wanted to have a shared responsibility for family engagement. We didn't want it to fall on the shoulders of just the family support workers. We really wanted to empower families to be part of the classroom and be part of the center and be part of the decision-making process, as what happens as far as their child and as far as what happens, policies and procedures or professional development that we use in the center.

We collected data. We used parent surveys that provided information about changes in the parents' perception of staff engagement and their own interactions throughout the course year. We did staff surveys to kind of get a viewpoint on what they saw as a parent – important parent-child relationships. And then we looked at our quarterly report.

So, what was the participation rate that we were seeing for parent-teacher conferences? And how did that -- and also, our data as far as attendance, and also looking at medical assistance and the number of home visits that were occurring. Our family support workers collected the parent surveys. Our leadership team collected both staff surveys and quarterly reports.

So what did the data show -- tell us? Well, through our staff surveys, we saw a huge need for professional development in the area of family engagement. And we also saw that teachers felt that parents did not want to be involved in the classrooms. Through our parent surveys, we saw just the opposite -- that they felt that they were not being included in the activities that were occurring in the classrooms and that parents felt that teachers were experts on their children in growth and development, so that they felt that they really shouldn't have a voice or shouldn't say anything, because they really saw the teacher in that role. And our quarterly reports indicated that our parent-teacher conferences were not as high as we really wanted them to be. We were looking at an 80 percent or higher rate of participation, and we were only showing 75 percent.

So, we made some program changes based on the data. So, the leadership team gathered and discussed -- and our leadership teams included our master teachers, which are the same role as maybe an education coordinator, myself, our executive director, HR, as well as family support. And based on that, the leadership team examined how changes could be made in the program. So, using a multi-disciplinary approach throughout the center. So, ourselves as a leadership team and using multi-disciplinary approach, as well as that same approach when we were training staff. Changes that we made in the programs -- we also looked at implementing and training and curriculum.

So, we did a training on the Touchpoints curriculum that really looked at family-child relationships and how we can play a part in that relationship but see the parent as the guiding force of that relationship, as the child's first teacher. We provided training to staff on what it means to be a reflective practitioner.

So, looking back on their own professional goals, looking at what data tells us in the classroom and what child data is telling us. And based on that, reflecting on that information and planning goals for the future, for the classroom, the child and with the family. We did see some program challenges. We really had to change the mindset of teachers and families. We wanted teachers and families to see that the family was the expert of the child, that they were the child's first teacher. We wanted teachers and families to be okay with -- that we don't have all the answers and that waiting and talking with the parent about the next steps the child is taking, so not coming to the table and saying that this is what's going to happen, and this is when it's going to happen. But really using data -- as a tool to talk with families. We really brought -- we saw the importance of including both family support, the leadership and the teaching staff at the table when we were discussing changes in the program. We had to really think outside of the box on how we would do reflective dialogue discussions and mentoring calls and how we had to make that a priority for our program, instead of putting it on the schedule, but knowing that we can take it off the calendar. So, that became a huge priority for us and to have real conversations with the team. So, really helping to build the trust amongst the whole group.

Some strategies that we used to address our challenges. To help change the mindset of the classroom teachers, we used monthly reflective supervision meetings, where classroom teachers were able to form goals around increasing family engagement in their classroom. For multi-disciplines at the table, we developed reflective dialogues with classroom teachers, family support and leadership. And again had to think outside of the box on how this would occur and when this would occur. And we really discussed the importance of the different roles and also how they intertwined with one another. For time constraints and scheduling we, again, made it a huge priority and we actually found time throughout the day when staff were available to meet. We just had to be very creative. And, again, open discussion; so training on what is reflective dialogue and then forming trusting relationships between all staff members.

Some changes that we saw in our program: Leadership -- leader observations. The staff were more willing to participate in difficult discussions with parents. They -- what we saw in the past was that myself or family support were being called when these difficult discussions came up. But teachers were more willing to participate and were very successful in these conversations. Classrooms became more welcoming; parents felt that they could enter the classroom and spend more time in the room and actually be a part of the activities that were taking place. And teachers became more comfortable with having parents enter and spend time in the classroom. Family support workers really saw a stronger connection between the family and the classroom, but also within themselves and what was happening in the classroom, too.

Our reflective practice was implemented as the organizational model. So, it was really characterized by sensitivity to the context, commitment to growth and change, shared goals, open communication, and commitment to reflecting on the work in the clear, professional standards of our program.

So, what did data show us? Well, we found that we were moving in the right direction. So, in our staff survey, classroom teachers really felt that they had made significant gains in development and relational knowledge immediately after the training. They really felt that they had made gains in their skill application and also that they were able to maintain the knowledge throughout the next six months and to continue to practice. Changes in our parents' views. According to the parent survey, parents viewed their teachers as more supportive. They felt that there was a better quality and a more collaborative relationship between themselves and the teacher. They had increased confidence in their own skills as a parent, and really saw that the center was more welcoming. And then we did see an increase in our parent-teacher conferences; parents in quarter one was at 75 percent, and in quarter three it was to an 89 percent. We see continuous improvement in our program. Our leadership team is continuously to be a multi-disciplinary approach. We meet on a weekly basis to ensure that our program goals are met. We continue to revisit scheduling of reflective dialogue and mentoring groups. We continue to use data to drive our decision-making. We look at our pre- and post-surveys completed by staff and by parents. We review the number of parent teacher conferences that are completed. But we also look at the number of families participating in parent meetings.

We continue to look at ways for growth, so really tapping into our staff and seeing where -- what are the next steps for professional development? And how do we continue to get their buy-in and to move -- in order to move forward?

Brandi Black Thacker: Wow, thanks a lot, Beth. That was really great information. And to you, too, Mindy. I really appreciate the real-life program examples that you guys have offered. I know that we all learned a lot from what you shared. I'd like to reflect just a little bit on the path that we've taken on the call together, so far, today. And where I'd really like to begin is with my favorite graphic, and yours, I'm sure, the PFCE Framework. As you know, this entire webinar series is focused on the first element in the yellow column: Program Leadership.

So, oftentimes when we go out across the country to speak about the Framework, this is the column that we refer to as our systems column. So, clearly, to have high-quality services, we have to have strong systemic structures. And for the purpose of this webinar series, we're really going to focus on these three elements. And, as you know, we've really honed in today on the one around program leadership. I'd also like to take us back to the beginning of our conversation, and talk just a little bit about what Kiersten shared. And I really love the piece about anyone and everyone can be a leader.

We know, in our Head Start and Early Head Start communities that we revere leaders at all layers and levels of our programs. And I really love the way and the research that she broke down for us, by John Kotter, about the three pieces and parts and how they tie to our culture in Head Start and Early Head Start. So, let me go back there.

Kiersten said "Leaders set directions." I really loved this piece because, you know, our favorite R word from our center is "relationships." And the leaders, to be able to set those directions, have to really be rooted in relationships with the governing boards, with their colleagues, of course, first and foremost with the parents, the use of data, the use of patterns. We know that all of those things live and grow within the context of relationship. So, the "Leaders set directions" piece really resonated with me. Leaders align people for us. From our center's perspective, we talk about it being everybody's business. It doesn't just live within the role of the family service folks; it really lives, again, a little reflection, in every layer and level of the program, so that we're all making deposits in the relationships besides families.

It's about communication and really breaking down those silos that have existed in the past between our content areas. And, I know I have lots of favorites, but this one really is one of them: Leaders motivate people. It's about walking beside each other, doing some co-construction, really recognizing our collective success, which really propels, of course, not only our programmatic practice forward, but how deeply the relationships are rooted beside families and as a collective, it's really just beneficial for everyone.

So, I wanted to just reflect on those three pieces that Kiersten offered and how they tie and connect to what we think and how we speak about not only the Framework, but the perspective of PFCE, as we share and learn from our friends across the country. I also wanted to reflect a little bit about some of the tidbits that Mindy and Beth shared with us.

There were so many rich nuggets that I hope you're going to get to take away. I loved the part about using data to make decisions. You guys know like I do this is one of our newest and most favorite buzz phrases: Data-driven decision-making. We create our systems that support the day-to-day practice, and we use the information we have in informal and formal ways to make good decisions about the trajectory of our program.

We use information that's already at our fingertips. We find out what's missing and how to create the systems that would enhance measuring what matters, what's meaningful. And Mindy really spoke to that during her part of our discussion. It's really important, too, to be able to recalibrate. That's the whole notion of what we'll get to talk about next time in our third part of the webinar series around continuous improvement. But we know we have to revisit, review, revise what we're doing based on the data and the information that comes to us, through these informal and formal avenues.

So, it's about really being able to take a step back, see what's working, see what's not, and just revise and go from there. Another piece that I thought was so important is that we have to connect all of our data and the work that we do to professional development for all staff. Not just for the family structure, but for our teachers, for our transportation folks, for our nutrition folks, for our governing bodies.

We really want to make sure that there is a strong foundation and understanding of strength-based relationship-rooted practice woven in throughout the entire program. So, again, it goes back to the notion of being able to make deposits in the relationships beside families, and when we're all doing that collectively, we move our families toward engagement beside them a lot more quickly.

The other piece is, give yourself permission to allow the process to take some time. Certainly, we heard from Mindy earlier that these changes can't happen overnight. So, I always -- most of you that I've had the chance to speak to you before know that I was a director in a different day and time and one of things that was very difficult for me is really wanting to see change and to see it quickly. But what we know is that these processes take time, and anything that's worth the solid system and the important infrastructure of our services is going to take a little bit of a notion, so we can recalibrate and really look at it and make sure that we capture what's working and where we can celebrate and sort of enhance what may need to be along the way.

That takes me to my last point, which is take the time to celebrate those successes. Both of our presenters from grantee said that this afternoon and I really think that's important. It's important for us to really be able to utilize and celebrate the time that we spent in the effort to deliver high-quality services to children and families. So, anytime that we have the opportunity to do that, I think we should take it, because our work is hard, but it's very rewarding. And I know that out there lots of wonderful things are happening.

So, that concludes a little bit of what I'd like to talk to you in summary this afternoon. Thank you, guys, so much for joining us this afternoon. We really love getting to spend time with you, hear your thoughts, hear your questions and your insights. And we'll certainly look forward to the next time we get to be together. Thanks a lot.

[Music]